



# WEST AUSTIN NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP

P.O. Box 5722 • Austin, Texas 78763-5722 • May - June, 2010

Organized 1973

*"To preserve our neighborhood and protect it from deterioration."*

**The next WANG Board meeting will occur on  
Monday, June 3, 2010 (7:00 pm) at Howson Branch Library!**

## Board of Directors

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Background Photo of Lime Kiln #PICA24140,  
Austin History Center, Austin Public Library

## May President's Message

By August W. "Happy" Harris III

### We are at a critical juncture!

On May 25, our neighborhood plan is scheduled to be heard at Planning Commission. In discussion with your WANG Board of Directors, the Boards of Bryker Woods Neighborhood Association (BWNA) and Pemberton Heights, we have advised the City of Austin that it should withdraw our Neighborhood Plan from the Planning Commission's agenda for an indeterminate period. We know many of you have been actively or at least peripherally involved in neighborhood planning since its inception and have dedicated time to this arduous process and we respect your commitment. But there are significant issues at hand that must be addressed before our Neighborhood Plan can proceed through the City approval processes.

Our overriding intent for advancing into the neighborhood planning process was to coordinate and parallel efforts with the Brackenridge Tract planning. Solely for political reasons, the City has demurred and thus this planning process has overwhelmingly failed. Regardless of what ultimately happens with a master plan for the Brackenridge Tract, it is inevitable that we will have a great number more dwelling units, whether student or market, in the planning area as a result. Until we have a known result, there is absolutely no reason to continue to pursue the City's density agenda in West Austin.

City staff would like our planning area to reconsider infill housing options.

It is singularly the desire of City staff that this take place since it is their agenda. At more than one CWANPA neighborhood planning meeting, you were most clear on infill options in adamantly rejecting them. There have been times when we saw the need to go back and revisit parts of the Neighborhood Plan. However, we were told time and time again by City staff that we couldn't go back and revisit or change certain things in the Plan. Apparently when it is City staff's agenda, that is indeed possible.

The Draft Plan currently is being reviewed by various City departments. We believe that the planning area should get to see those comments well in advance of any hearings at Planning Commission. And what Draft Plan are the departments reviewing? We would underscore that there are discrepancies between versions. We have not been told whether the Draft Plan being reviewed by the departments includes the comments/revisions from the Final Open House, subsequent comments/corrections nor the possible results of such departmental reviews. And are the departments charged with trying to put a dollar figures on our requested enhancements. One flippant comment from City staff at one of our planning meetings was that if we wanted capital improvements, we could take it up with Council. Capital improvements, in fact, were one of the early inducements cited by staff for going through much of this.

Critical information requested by BWNA has not been forthcoming and thus it would seem premature for the

**Be sure to visit our website at <http://www.WestAustinNG.com>**

## May President's Message, *continued from page 1*

City to have placed this on Planning Commission's agenda. Furthermore, the City's Neighborhood Housing and Community Development department has weighed in on this process, at the last minute. It is absolutely disgraceful that they weren't engaged far earlier than this, if nothing else than to provide us with pertinent background information as well as their opinion. They call for increased density without even considering the massive and perhaps overwhelming impact of any additional density created as a result of the redevelopment of part or all of the Brackenridge Tract and are completely out of touch with the realities on the ground. They also fail to take into consideration private deed restrictions and environmental limitations such as those imposed in the Drinking Water Protection Zone that encompasses a great deal of Tarrytown.

Given City staff's desire to revisit infill, given the inadequacies of the Neighborhood Housing and Community Development recommendations, given the failure to respond to BWNA's request timely and given the massive unknowns with the Brackenridge Tract, WANG recommended that City staff refer the CWANPA Plan back to the Neighborhood Planning Subcommittee until such time as these items have been adequately addressed and reconciled. We are, to say the least, disappointed with yet another failure of the City's process.

This leads us into the Brackenridge Tract. On May 13, the Board of Regents' subcommittee assigned with reviewing Cooper Robertson's horrendous master plans will be holding a public comment session. While we expect no action to come out of the hearing, WANG, Save Muni and various other organizations will be there and will speak. As has always been the case, we are strongly advocating that the Board of Regents dispose of CR&P's master plans much as the Gov dispatched a threatening coyote. We are providing a draft resolution to that end that we hope the Regents will consider adopting. In addition, we will be providing them with a draft resolution directed at beginning anew the planning process in a more community centered format and including the provision to begin discussions on conveying Muni and perhaps WAYA to the City. Creating a certain future

for the Tract, for Muni and for WAYA is critical. The same thing is true of the neighborhood.

President Powers was quoted in the Alcalde as saying that "It is not our mission to support golf in West Austin." But he and the University sure are willing to come hat in hand asking West Austinites to donate to the University, to support the mission of the University and to engage in campus activities. Does anybody see the inherent irony in that besides me? He better care. I should note that I am a Texas Ex and a Life Member of the Association and had been a donor to my college. But I have made it clear to the University and the Exes that I have made a personal decision to withhold giving of any kind until I am satisfied with the resolution of Brack.

The folks in West Austin are (passionate) supporters of the University, its faculty, its staff, its programs, its athletics etc. It and the City of Austin are intertwined and rely on each other inseparably for their mutual continued success. It is foolhardy on the part of the Regents and the administration to deny, diminish or dismiss this. Whether the Regents are treading slowly on this because they understand the potential impact on its most engaged and supportive constituency or because it is merely paying lip service waiting for market improvements we may never know. We certainly hope it is the former.

To President Power's comment, this, of course, is not just about saving (affordable, community-wide) golf in West Austin. It is about preserving critical open space, green space, and recreational opportunities for an ever growing and continually vital and active community – including the University community. It is about compatibly redeveloping part of Brack in such a way that it will serve as an asset to the University, to the City and to West Austin, something we all can agree on.

As always, your donations are critical to our continuing advocacy for West Austin. Please go to [www.WestAustinNG.com](http://www.WestAustinNG.com) to renew your dues. And please encourage your friends and neighbors to join. Between Brack and the conclusion of Neighborhood Planning, there is much going on and your support is essential!

## MINUTES FOR MAY 3, 2010 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

By Michael Cannatti, Secretary

These are the minutes of the **West Austin Neighborhood Group Board of Directors Meeting** on Monday, April 12, 2010 at the Howson Branch Library.

**I. Call to Order (7:07):** The meeting was called to order with the following Board members in attendance: Mary Arnold, Joseph Bennett, August Harris, Cathy Kyle, Selina Serna, Blake Tollett, Erik Cary, Joyce Basciano, and Michael Cannatti.

**II. Approval of Minutes (7:10):** After Blake noted that the final item under "Neighborhood Communications" was

incorrectly labeled "612 Upson" and should have been labeled "Proposed City of Austin Street Re-construction Tarrytown Area," the April minutes were approved after Blake noted that.

### **III. Neighbor Communications:**

**Hillview Bicycle Lane Proposal:** Laura Grim presented information about a proposed Casis bike line on Hillview which would provide a route for kids leaving Casis in the afternoon. The idea is supported by the City's Bicycle & Pedestrian Program, and PTA support is expected. Under the proposal, a no-parking bike lane would be created between 2:30-3:30 pm on the west

side of Hillview from Casis to Bowman or Windsor. August recommended that Laura contact the neighbors along Hillview to get their support.

**Board Action:** On a motion by Mike that was seconded by Selina, the Board voted unanimously to support the proposal, provided that neighbor support was obtained.

### **IV. Committee Reports:**

**Zoning –** No report, but Mike noted that Chris Allen was interested in helping a potential buyer of 505 Deep Eddy clear up the permit history issues there, and Blake indicated that he had already talked with Mr. Allen.

**May Minutes**, *continued from page 2*

**Communications (7:25):**

(1) Newsletter Issues – The delivery status for the newsletter is not known. Cathy Kyle reiterated her decision to take over as newsletter editor with Gwen. The Board voted to combine the April and May newsletters into a single issue.

**Membership (7:26)** – Joseph Bennett graciously agreed to assume membership responsibilities. August will send the membership database to Joe. Each board member was asked to look over the list of expired members to see who they can contact to re-join.

**(1) O.Henry Middle School** – August reported on the recent after-school problems at O.Henry Middle School, including property damage, shoplifting at 7-11, trash, fights, and threats against neighbors. August has met with Pete Price (O.Henry principal) and Mark Williams (AISD School Board of Trustees) about the problems, but there are few controls that the school system has over the after-hours behavior, with many of the kids being from other parts of town. Neighbor are encouraged to call 911 and submit any police reports about criminal behavior. It does not appear that the AISD security reports are conveyed to the APD database. Suggestions from the Board include having an APD presence at the school for a week, hiring additional security at O.Henry, or having parent monitors staff the area after school.

**(2) Brackenridge Tract Update** – On May 13, 2010, UT's Board of Regents' special advisory committee will receive public comment on the Brackenridge Tract Conceptual Master Plans from Cooper Robertson & Partners (CR&P). Mary requested that WANG re-submit its prior statement on the CR&P plans to the advisory committee, and review the 2008 comments on the CR&P plans from the Neighborhood Plan meeting. Written comments can be submitted by e-mail at BrackTract@UTSystem.edu. August reported on the status of efforts to prepare a resolution for the Board of Regents rejecting the CR&P plans and creating a Joint Committee for developing a viable master plan, and expressed the desire to see a representative from the City Council at the hearing. On the topic of the City's support of the University, Mary noted that the Dell Pediatric Research Center fails to acknowledge the City's contribution of the land to the project. Mary also noted that the financial analysis of the development options should take into account not only the capital costs of building out the development, but also the fact that there will be no income generated until at least 2019. Neighbor Betty suggested mounting a state-wide campaign to withhold alumni financial support if the educational benefits not provided by development of Brack Tract.

**(2) Neighborhood Planning** – On May 25, 2010, the Planning Commission will consider the Central West Austin Combined Neighborhood Plan. Mary expressed concern that the Drinking Water Protection Zone requirements are not reflected in the current draft of the Environmental Chapter. There is also uncertainty about what is included in the current draft of the plan, what information is being provided to the city departments (e.g., Neighborhood Housing and Community Development (NHCD)) in connection with their review, and what is included in the "Affordability Impact Statement" (AIS) report on our plan. There is concern that the neighborhood stakeholders should have at least 3 weeks to review the affordable housing

information.

**Board Action:** The Board voted unanimously to provide Paul DiGiuseppe with a deadline of Friday, May 7, 2010, for providing the AIS report and other requested information or otherwise rescheduling the Planning Commission meeting.

**VI. Treasurer's Report** – Selina reported that the operating account had a balance of \$2436.91, and that the oak wilt account had a balance of \$1204.44.

**VII. Old Business -- No report.**

**VIII. New Business -- No report.**

**IX. Adjournment:** At 8:27, the meeting was adjourned. The next WANG Board meeting will occur on **Monday, June 3, 2010 (7:00 pm) at a Howson Branch Library.**



**1605 PEASE**

If you live in Central Austin i.e. the 03 zip code and you are now or soon could be thinking about downsizing but can't ever imagine leaving the neighborhood, you need to consider a condo at  
1605 Pease Road.

5 units, 3 2BR/IBA and 2 1BR/IBA units will be available this spring. The units are under renovation and landscape improvements are under way.

For preliminary information, call 512-474-1632 and ask for information on 1605 Pease or call 512-731-4471, or 512-218-1300.

## April President's Message

By August W. "Happy" Harris III

What an amazing Spring we are seeing this year! As I write this, I am looking out into my garden filled with a variety of antique shrub roses complimented with Knockouts yielding an explosion of colors. If you haven't seen the yard on Windsor across from the Girls' School painted a vibrant red thanks to a field of poppies, you are missing something extraordinary. Gardens around the neighborhood are incredibly vivid this year. For you allergy sufferers, our deepest sympathies for it has been a truly astounding year for pollen. According to the trusty media, the worst is by us. I don't know about you but all my pecan trees are coming out and those tassels do a pretty good job of turning everything yellow.



### 18th Annual Heritage Homes Tour May 22, 2010 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Tarrytown is hosting the Heritage Society of Austin's Heritage Homes Tour. For the sake of transparency, I must disclose that I serve on the Board of the Heritage Society as well. The Homes Tour is always a very well attended event and this year will be no different. Historic Clarksville was the scene of last year's tour while the year before was a look at our fabulous midcentury modern homes. This year's featured homes include 2008 Scenic Drive, 2105 Scenic Drive, 2102 Scenic Drive, 2900 Tarry Trail, 2528 Tanglewood Trail, and 2101 Schulle. I would encourage everybody to attend but not necessarily for the reasons you might think. For us from a neighborhood perspective, it is a great opportunity to meet others within our West Austin community. It also highlights preservation and architecture, subjects very near and dear to me and to many of you.

Jim Robertson, a senior planner for the City of Austin, has expressed on a number of occasions his disdain for neighborhoods that are resistant to density. His line, in a far more condescending manner, is that neighborhoods don't want to change. My response to him is that we aren't opposed to change. We just don't happen to share his particular vision of additional density. Some change and appropriate densification in selected areas may indeed be healthy.

Preservation is not just about saving historic buildings though that plays a very significant role. Preservation is also about saving historical context and the very fragile historical fabric of a community. West Austin neighborhoods are fragile. And all have very different characteristics. These characteristics have evolved over decades – or over a century. The kind of infill folks like

Robertson, and there are others both in the public and private sectors like him, would like to see would result in the destruction of that fragile fabric. The real estate maxim is "location, location, location." You acquired your home certainly based on proximity but you likely also did so because of the context of place, the fabric of the neighborhood that surrounds your home, the streetscape and so forth. Whether it is the neighborhood planning process or the Brackenridge Tract, or even a remodel or new construction, "no change" is rarely discussed nor is conformity. The most frequently used term by neighborhood folks is compatibility. Change and growth can occur most effectively when there is a sensitive transition that respects the streetscape and scale of adjacent properties and thus preserves that which we value.

As the neighborhood plan moves forward to various City boards and commissions, West Austin will be the target of some who want to see additional infill beyond what we as stakeholders in the Central West Austin Combined Neighborhood Plan want. We have stable primarily single family neighborhoods that work. I don't think any of us wants a destabilized neighborhood. There are places where additional density is appropriate. And there are places where it is not. There are folks who will suggest that it is our responsibility to take on additional density as the City continues to grow. At least a few of these have approved site plan after site plan after site plan that has led to the sprawl we have today. So they are culpable. And now they are telling us to pick up the burden of additional density because they approved or endorsed sprawl in the past. The Legislature is equally culpable because it has refused to give counties the tools that they need to address unabated sprawl.

While we are on cheery subjects, let's talk a little about City codes. We have had quite a few cases come forward and far more complaints and questions come to us. Here is the basic deal on fences. Fences must not exceed six (6) feet in height. Adjacent neighbors may reach an agreement on shared fence heights from 6 to 8 feet. Beyond that, a variance is required. Occasionally, there are topographical issues that rationalize

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## April President's Message, *continued from page 4*

greater heights. But without a true hardship, we typically have not supported these variances nor has the Board of Adjustments approved them. Next, West Austin is one of many neighborhoods that has opted in to the "no front yard/side yard parking." Not surprisingly, there are a few violators who are parking in the grass. The City will enforce it but the vehicle must be parked illegally at the time. Lastly, it is recreation season in Austin which means lots of boats are out and about. Both in and out of the water. It is illegal to park a trailer of any type on the road unless it is hooked up to a vehicle. For any violations remember to call 311. The City will follow up on the complaint. And as always, feel free to drop us a line.

Let's conclude on some upbeat news. Congrats to Save Munny for an outstanding tournament this past weekend. Notables came out in mass to support the cause. The rain bracketed the tournament but a grand time was had by all. All of our

neighborhood parks had a great It's My Park Day. Volunteers came out to support all of our parks. I would encourage you to support in time, material and/or money each of these jewels. And for heaven's sake, get out and enjoy them!

Please make sure to renew your dues. If you would like to receive your monthly WANG newsletter via email, let us know and we'll update our records. At the moment, emailed newsletters are coming out in Adobe PDF format. We hope to transfer to HTML format in the near future. I'm sure you realize the cost savings we incur as a result. It allows us to stretch our membership and advertising revenue a little further. We will continue to print the newsletter for those that prefer print versions. And remember, you can pay your dues online at [www.WestAustinNG.com](http://www.WestAustinNG.com) or drop your dues in the mail. We thank you for your support of our advocacy for West Austin!

## MINUTES FOR APRIL 12, 2010 BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

By Michael Cannatti, Secretary

These are the minutes of the **West Austin Neighborhood Group Board of Directors Meeting** on Monday, April 12, 2010 at the Howson Branch Library.

**I. Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order with the following Board members in attendance: Blake Tollett, Selina Serna, Joseph Bennett, August Harris, Cathy Kyle, Gwen Jewiss, Gwen Jewiss, and Michael Cannatti, subsequently joined by Susan Pascoe and Mary Arnold. All noted with appreciation the return to the lovely and refurbished Howson Branch Library meeting room.

**II. Approval of Minutes:** The March minutes were not available for review or approval.

### **III. Neighbor Communications:**

**2010 Census:** Katie Larson presented information on the 2010 Census, the federal monies and representation lost to Travis County because of undercounting at the last census, and the related part time employment opportunities available Travis County that pay \$17/hour. Additional information at [www.2010censusjobs.gov](http://www.2010censusjobs.gov).

**505 Deep Eddy:** Vince Marbibbi had been invited to present information to the Board, but did not attend. Mr. Marbibbi informed the Board by email that the proposed sale had fallen through, and that the owner had moved on to the next bidder.

**808 Wayside:** The property owner (Mr. Sigmon) and his agent (Mr. Cancialosi) presented information on their proposal

to seek a variance to revive an expired variance for the back garage granted in 2008 and obtain a variance for a non-permitted corner portion of the building. Mr. Sigmon noted that there had been neighbor support for the previous variance. The variance request may be filed in May. Blake suggested that the garage variance be conditioned on the garage being limited to one-story, and the owner was agreeable. No action taken.

**612 Upson:** The property owner (Mr. Sherrill) presented information on their proposal to seek a variance to the front yard setback requirement in order to enclose part of their front porch. Happy noted that the enclosure would preclude the property from obtaining historic landmark protection. The board recommended contacting the neighbors to explain his request before filing any variance request. No action taken.

**612 Upson:** Richard Fraser (Richard.Fraser@ci.austin.tx.us) with the City of Austin's Public Works Department presented information on status of the design work that is being by the 2006 Bond election for the Group 25 Projects in the Tarrytown area. The design work would include not only repairing streets, but also adding new sidewalks to Sunny Slope Drive, Spring Lane, Dormarion Lane, and Tower Drive (adjacent Tarrytown Park) in accordance with the draft sidewalk plan in the draft West Austin Neighborhood Plan Transportation Plan. Mr. Fraser agreed to provide Happy with a list of

other construction projects underway in the neighborhood. Cannatti will post the draft sidewalk plan on WANG's website. No action taken.

### **IV. Committee Reports:**

#### **• Zoning**

**C15-2010-0028** – 2312 W 9th Street (Applicant: Vincent P. Hauser 452-3041): The applicant has withdrawn the variance request to erect a second floor addition to both units of an existing duplex maintaining the existing roof attachment. Board Action: No action taken.

**C15-2010-0034** – 2500 Spring Lane (Applicant: Diane & Bill Patterson): The applicant requested a variance to increase the maximum height of a solid fence requirement of the LDC from 6 feet in height to 8 feet in height (along Bowman Avenue) in order to maintain a fence for a single family residence in an SF-3 zoning district. There are letters of support from 5 neighbors and no known opposition. The apparent hardship of being next to the post office was noted, but there was also concern noted about the unpermitted construction of the 8-foot fence, as well as applicant's stated desire to extend the 8-foot height along the entire length of the fence.

Board Action: No action taken.

**C14H-2010 2504** – 2504 Bridle Path (Applicant: Historic Research & Representation, Suzanne Deaderick 477-2929)

(Pending) 3810 Kennelwood Road (Owner: Rona & David Baizer 477-

**April Minutes**, continued from page 5

7200 Applicant: Historic Research & Representation, Suzanne Deaderick 477-2929

Board Action: No action taken. Board noted concerns about meritless historic applications being pursued, difficulties of obtaining Local Historic District protections, current political concerns about tax abatements for historic properties in neighborhood, and legitimacy of providing tax benefits for maintaining historic properties.

Communications

**(1) Newsletter** – Happy reported that the newsletter had been emailed to all email recipients, but that the paper copy had not been delivered. In addition, Happy reported that Republic Printing will handle printing and mailing duties for the newsletter.

**(2) Newsletter Editor** – Cathy Kyle graciously agreed to assume newsletter editor responsibilities, and the Board rapidly moved onto a new topic before she could reconsider her decision.

Infrastructure

**(1) Brackenridge Tract Update** – Mary reported that, on April 17th, the Legends of Lions Golf Tournament will be held to celebrate the rich history of the course. Ben Crenshaw will be honored along with other golfing legends listed at [http://www.statesman.com/blogs/content/shared-gen/blogs/austin/golf/entries/2010/04/01/on\\_golf\\_save\\_muny\\_designates\\_t.html?cxntfid=blogs\\_backspin](http://www.statesman.com/blogs/content/shared-gen/blogs/austin/golf/entries/2010/04/01/on_golf_save_muny_designates_t.html?cxntfid=blogs_backspin). Mary also reported that the UT Board of Regents removed the website notification of a public hearing on the development proposal by Cooper Robertson and Partners for the Brackenridge Tract (the CRAP proposal). Happy reported on the efforts to meet with Austin City Council members to prepare a joint resolution relating to the City's interest in acquiring the Lion's Golf Course property from the University. Mary reported that based on her review of notes from the 1980's negotiations between the City and University concerning Brackenridge, many of the same arguments in favor of development were being made that we

hear today, including financial pressures for obtaining higher value from the property. Same old, same old.

**(2) Neighborhood Planning** -- The Final Open House meeting occurred on March 4, 2010. Results of public input at the Final Open House has not been seen, but there is concern in different quarters with the role that City Planner Paul DiGiuseppe has played with zoning change requests by local businesses. The plan is scheduled to be presented to the Planning Commission in May, 2010

**VI. Treasurer's Report** – Selina reported that the operating account had a balance of \$2196.51, and that the oak wilt account had a balance of \$1204.44.

**VII. Old Business** -- No report.

**VIII. New Business** -- No report.

**IX. Adjournment:** At 8:55, the meeting was adjourned. The next WANG Board meeting will occur on **Monday, May 3, 2010 (7:00 pm) at a Howson Branch Library.**

**Sara Madera**  
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## O. HENRY MIDDLE SCHOOL MEETING

O. Henry Middle School will host a neighborhood meeting on Tuesday, May 25, 6:30 p.m., in the library. Representatives from the school, AISD police, Austin Police Dept., and WANG will be present to hear concerns about neighborhood safety and to brainstorm solutions. This is occurring as a result of continuing problems caused by groups of students in the immediate area of O.Henry after hours. WANG

has been working with both the neighbors and AISD for the last two years to develop workable solutions.

The City of Austin's Planning Commission will meet to review and possibly adopt the Central West Austin Combined Neighborhood Plan at 6:00 PM at City Hall, 301 W. 2nd Street, in Council Chambers. It is critical that you be in attendance.

# 6th Annual Tarrytown End of School Party



**Reed Park  
Wednesday, June 2  
5pm - 9pm**

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# West Austin Neighborhood Group

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**Scott Ferguson** - Chief Operating Officer, West Austin Native



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